NRO APPROVED FOR RELEASE
22 June 2015

Tab 22

Policy: Peaceful Uses
Policy: Space Law

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I-5319/65

12 May 1965

Dr. Edward Welsh
Executive Secretary
National Aeronautics and Space Council
Executive Office Building
17th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Welsh:

In response to your 19 April memorandum concerning possible U.S. emergency recovery support for Soviet manned space flights, I believe that further staff talks would be desirable, to explore several issues of concern to the Department of Defense.

For example, the Soviets might consider the initial offer as only a propaganda gesture if it were limited, as your memorandum suggests, to U.S. resources normally involved in air-sea rescue. We would have to go far beyond these units to provide an adequate recovery capability. Yet any more ambitious offer would have to be studied to insure that the operational missions of our forces would not be compromised by it, and for cost implications. In addition, the disparity between the land-oriented recovery operations of the USSR and our own techniques, which emphasize recovery at sea, suggests that true reciprocity would be difficult to achieve.

I also believe that any additional U.S. move on this subject should await the result of our efforts in the UN (Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space), and our related talks with the Soviets, toward world-wide agreement on assistance to, and return of, astronauts and space objects.

Dr. Albert Weinstein of the Defense Research and Engineering Staff, and Colonel Marshall Sanders of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs have been designated to represent Defense at the staff discussions, in accordance with your suggestion.

Sincerely,

/s/
ROBERT S. McNAMARA

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